

MSGNO 76 (FBXX) *08/09/85* *07:08*

ZCZC 12:06:18Z (FB)

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RTTUZYUW RUDOMKA4667 2510821 MTMS-UUUU--RUEBHAA.

R 061143Z SEP 85

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SUBJ AFX

USSR PAPER LAUNDS MAIL SERVICE TO TROOPS IN DRA

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<> MOSCOW <><>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA<><> IN RUSSIAN 1 SEP 85 SECOND EDITION P 1
<> ((DISPATCH BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL V. SKRIZHALIN, <><>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA<><>
CORRESPONDENT, UNDER THE RUBRIC "AFGHAN REPORT": "THE FIELD MAIL
IS THERE..."))
((EXCERPTS)) LIMITED CONTINGENT OF SOVIET FORCES IN
AFGHANISTAN -- IT WAS 18 DAYS SINCE THE MAILMAN LAST BROUGHT A LETTER
FROM THE SON IN AFGHANISTAN. THE MOTHER'S HEART COULD NOT TAKE ANY
MORE. AND SO, A LETTER FROM THE POLTAVA REGION ARRIVED AT THE
<> <><>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA<><> CORRESPONDENT'S OFFICE IN KABUL. THE MOTHER HAD
WRITTEN TO ASK: COULD SOMETHING HAVE HAPPENED TO HER SON LESHA?
AND SHE ENDED WITH A REQUEST TO THE CORRESPONDENT: "SHOULD YOU
HAPPEN TO VISIT HIS GARRISON, TAKE A LETTER FROM MY SON AND DROP
IT IN A MAILBOX IN KABUL."
I REASSURED THE WOMAN AS BEST AS I COULD. AT THE END I ADDED
A POSTSCRIPT: "OUR MAIL SERVICE OPERATES NORMALLY." SOON AN
ANSWER ARRIVED FROM THE SMALL UKRAINIAN TOWN, BURIED AMONG THE
ORCHARDS: "AT LONG LAST WE GOT NEWS FROM ALESHA. HE HAD BEEN AWAY
ON DUTY. YES, YOU WERE RIGHT; THE MAIL SERVICE WORKS WELL AND THE
LETTERS ARRIVE QUICKLY."
LETTERS ARE ALSO AWAITED IMPATIENTLY IN AFGHANISTAN. HOW CAN YOU
NOT RECALL THE SAYING: "WHEN THE FIELD MAIL ARRIVES, THE SOLDIER
IS WARMED UP BY A DISTANT HEAT." ((PASSAGE OMITTED))
FLIGHTS IN THE AFGHAN SKY INVOLVE NUMEROUS DANGERS. THESE DANGERS
ARE SHARED WITH THE AIRMEN ON AN EQUAL BASIS BY THE "MAILMEN."
ENSIGNS N. KRAVCHENKO AND P. UDALOV, SERGENAT G. GLUSHKO, AND
PRIVATE N. GOGLEV TAKE OFF EVERY DAY. THEIR ROUTES TAKE THEM
OVER DESERTS, MOUNTAINS, AND VILLAGE ZONES. AND IT IS NOT ALWAYS
ONLY FRIENDLY EYES THAT FOLLOW THE AIRCRAFT OR HELICOPTER IN THE
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SOU PRESS

AIR....

WHILE I WAS PREPARING THIS REPORT AND TALKING WITH LIEUTENANT COLONEL V. RYTENKO, CHIEF OF THE COURIER MAIL COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE, AND MAJOR V. VOLSKIY, HIS DEPUTY FOR POLITICAL MATTERS, COURIER SENIOR ENSIGN V. MORDOVIN (NOT SO LONG AGO A FAMOUS HEAVY ATHLETE IN THE ARMY AND INTERNATIONAL MASTER OF SPORTS), CAME IN TO REPORT HIS RETURN FROM A TRIP. THE OFFICER LOOKED AT HIS WATCH AND STERNLY ASKED:

"WHY ARE YOU LATE?"

THE COURIER EXPLAINED THE REASONS BEHIND THE 90-MINUTE DELAY. FOR OUR PART, WE CONGRATULATED HIM ON THE FACT THAT HE WAS NOW AMONG US.

INCIDENTS LIKE THE FOLLOWING ALSO HAPPEN. THE MAIL HELICOPTER HAD TO MAKE A "FORCED LANDING" IN THE MOUNTAINS WHILE EN ROUTE -- COINCIDENCES DO HAPPEN -- TO THE GARRISON WHERE THE LIEUTENANT FROM THE POLTAVA REGION WAS SERVING. THEY LANDED NEAR A VILLAGE WHICH, AS IT TRANSPIRED, HAD BEEN OCCUPIED BY DUSHMANS. THEY DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG FOR THE DUSHMANS. SENIOR LIEUTENANT I. SHEVELEV, WHO WAS FLYING TO THE GARRISON FOR A SCHEDULED INSPECTION OF MAIL SERVICES; COURIER ENSIGN M. BAYURSKIY; AND MAIL COLLECTOR PRIVATE V. KRIVITSKIY JOINED THE CREW IN TAKING UP POSITIONS IN A CIRCLE OF DEFENSE. ASSISTANCE ARRIVED PROMPTLY. ((PASSAGE OMITTED))

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